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P 020817Z FEB 94
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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TAGS: PREF, RW, BY

SUBJECT: BURUNDI REFUGEES: TOO MANY PROBLEMS;
RWANDAN RETURNEES: HOW TO HELP?

REF: KIGALI 0252

1. SUMMARY. UNHCR SAYS MALNUTRITION AND DEATH RATES
REMAIN "FAR TOO HIGH" AMONG BURUNDI REFUGEES. WFP

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L. MILLS
DATE/CASE ID: 20 NOV 2002 200003723

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COOPERATION ESSENTIAL TO OVERCOME FOOD QUANTITY/QUALITY PROBLEMS. DYSENTERY STILL MAJOR KILLER. REPATRIATION BEGINNING, BUT SECURITY IN BURUNDI REMAINS UNHCR CONCERN. TAKING A REGIONAL APPROACH, UNHCR PLANS ASSISTANCE TO RETURNEES. UNHCR IS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO RWANDAN REPATRIATES FROM BURUNDI BUT IS RELUCTANT TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH RETURNEES FROM UGANDA. POST RECOMMENDS USG CONSIDER ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO BURUNDI REFUGEE EMERGENCY, CONTINUE TO PRESS WFP TO ASSURE FOOD SECURITY, AND URGE UNHCR TO PLAY A ROLE IN ADDRESSING EARLY REFUGEE RETURN FROM UGANDA. END SUMMARY.

MALNUTRITION

2. RATES TOO HIGH. UNHCR EMERGENCY COORDINATOR, FEDDE GROOT, BRIEFED DCM AND USAID DEPUTY 1/25 ON SITUATION AMONG BURUNDI REFUGEES. HE SAID THERE WERE STILL FAR TOO MANY PROBLEMS FOR THE END OF THE THIRD MONTH OF THE EMERGENCY. TOP ON HIS LIST OF PROBLEMS WAS MALNUTRITION, WHICH HE SAID WAS 16-20 PERCENT FOR UNDER 5'S IN CAMPS IN BUTARE PREFECTURE, BUT UP TO AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MUCH AS 30 PERCENT IN SOME CAMPS IN BUGESERA, SOUTH OF KIGALI. HE SAID THE NON-COMPARABILITY OF THE STATISTICS DUE TO THE NUMBER OF NGOS INVOLVED IN MBASURING AND VARIETY OF MEASURING TECHNIQUES COULD NOT OBSCURE UNIVERSALLY HIGH MALNUTRITION RATES.

3. FOOD QUANTITY/QUALITY. THE MAJOR PROBLEM, GROOT SAID, WAS UNSATISFACTORY FOOD AVAILABILITY. HE DESCRIBED THE FOOD BASKED OF THE FIRST SIX WEEKS OF THE EMERGENCY "MEDICALLY INADEQUATE" AT 1300 KCALS. THE NEW RATION, AGREED HE SAID AT 2100 KCAL, NEVER EXCEEDED 1900 KCAL. (NOTE: IT WAS NEWS TO EMBASSY AND USAID THAT THE RATION WAS TO HAVE REACHED 2100 KCALS. END NOTE.) THE REASON, HE SAID, WAS THAT 50 GRAMS OF CSB HAD NEVER BEEN INCLUDED. WFP IS VAGUE ABOUT WHEN THE CSB WILL ARRIVE IN RWANDA. HE ADVISED USAID TO EXPECT A REQUEST FOR HELP IN OBTAINING CSB FROM STOCKS IN MOZAMBIQUE.

4. PIPELINE. ECHOING USAID'S OWN ASSESSMENT, GROOT

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SAID THE WFP PIPELINE OFFERED NO/NO FOOD SECURITY FOR THE OPERATION. HE SAID WFP IS VAGUE ABOUT FOOD SOURCES AND UNABLE TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS IN COUNTRY AND WHAT IS COMING.

5. DISTRIBUTION. GROOT SAID THAT FOOD WAREHOUSING AND ONWARD TRANSPORTATION TO DISTRIBUTION POINTS, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RWANDAN RED CROSS (RRC) UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED CROSS (IFRC), IS GRADUALLY COMING UNDER CONTROL. EXPATRIATE FOOD MONITORS, TO ASSURE
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RBFUGEES RECEIVE THEIR DUE, ARE THE KEY TO RELIEVING PRBSSURES ON LOCAL RRC WORKERS. IFRC, SLOW TO RESPOND INITIALLY, HAS HAD 12 FOOD MONITORS SUPERVISING THE 23 FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES SINCE EARLY JANUARY. UNHCR IS RECRUITING 8 UN VOLUNTEERS TO BRING THE TOTAL TO 20. ALSO, SINCE THE LATE DBCEMBER CENSUS, LEAKAGE TO LOCAL RWANDANS HAS VIRTUALLY ENDED, REDUCING ACTUAL BENEFICIARIES FROM

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SUBJECT: BURUNDI REFUGEES: TOO MANY PROBLEMS;

400,000 ACTUAL RECIPIENTS AT THE END OF DECEMBER TO
THE CURRENT 272,000. (HOWEVER, WITH DROUGHT PLAGUING
THE AREA WHERE THE REFUGEE CAMPS ARE, TENSIONS ARE
RISING BETWEEN REFUGEES AND LOCALS.)

6. SIX WEEKS TO RECOVERY. GROOT PREDICTED THAT IT
WOULD TAKE AT LEAST SIX WEEKS TO REDUCE MALNUTRITION
LEVELS SIGNIFICANTLY, PROVIDING REFUGEES RECEIVED THE
1900 KCALS NOW BEING DELIVERED, AND PROVIDING THE
LBAKAGE CONTINUED TO BE CONTROLLED. THIS WILL
REQUIRE ENSURED WFP PIPELINE AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE 8
UNV'S. GROOT SAID WFP/KIGALI HAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE
TO A UNHCR REQUEST TO INCREASE FOOD RATIONS TO 2300
KCALS, BUT HE WORRIES WFP/ROME, STUNG BY FOOD
DIVERSIONS IN THE NORTH, MAY NOT AGREE.

HEALTH SYSTEMS

7. DEATH RATES HIGH. GROOT SAID THAT DEATH RATES
AMONG THE REFUGEES ARE STABLE BUT UNACCEPTABLY HIGH
AT 3.7/10,000/DAY. DYSENTERY IS STILL THE MAIN
KILLER, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE UNUSUAL PHENOMENON
ON LACK OF SOLIDARITY AMONG REFUGEES IS A
CONTRIBUTING FACTOR. HE EXPLAINED THAT EVEN THE

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REFUGEE STAFF, MAKING HOME VISITS TO ASSURE PEOPLE
RECEIVE MEDICAL ATTENTION AS NEEDED, SEEMED
DISINTERESTED IN HELPING FELLOW REFUGEES IN
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DISTRESS.

8. WATER/SANITATION/DECONGESTION. NEVERTHELESS,
REFUGEE LIVING CONDITIONS ARE IMPROVING.
SEMI-PERMANENT WATER SYSTEMS INSTALLED BY CARE
INTERNATIONAL AND OXFAM ARE REPLACING EARLY EMERGENCY
WATER SYSTEMS OF MSF/B AND MSF/F, WITH 8 LITERS OF
WATER PER PERSON PER DAY CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO ALL
REFUGEES. THERE IS ONE LATRINE PER 80 REFUGEES.
ALSO, THE PRIORITY CAMP MOVES ARE NEARLY COMPLETE,
WITH THE LAST MAJOR MOVE BEGUN JANUARY 27.

REPATRIATION BEGINNING

9. ABOUT 2,000 PER WEEK. GROOT SAID THAT
SPONTANEOUS REPATRIATION HAS BEGUN, ALTHOUGH AT A
LOWER RATE THAN FROM TANZANIA. DESPITE A CONTINUING
TRICKLE OF ARRIVALS FROM KIRUNDO PROVINCE, HE SAID A
"COUPLE THOUSAND" REFUGEES A WEEK HAVE BEEN RETURNING
SINCE EARLY JANUARY FROM THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST
PREFECTURES OF BUTARE, GIKONGORO, AND CYANGUGU. HE
ATTRIBUTED THIS MOVEMENT TO STABILIZATION OF THE
SITUATION IN BURUNDI, RUMORS OF SCHOOL OPENINGS, AND
THE APPROACH OF THE NEW PLANTING SEASON. HE ALSO
NOTED THAT THOSE REFUGEES WHO CAME FROM JUST ACROSS
THE BORDER AND HAD NOT THEMSELVES EXPERIENCED
VIOLENCE SEEMED TO BE THE FIRST ONES RETURNING.

10. BURUNDI MINISTER VISITS. BURUNDI'S CIVIL
SERVICE MINISTER, LEONARD NYANGOMA, VISITED RWANDA
FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEGINNING 1/19. GROOT SAID UNHCR
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HAD DELIBERATELY KEPT ITS DISTANCE FROM THE MISSION
WHOSE STATED OBJECTIVE WAS TO PROMOTE REPATRIATION
AND LOOK INTO FOOD DIVERSIONS. NEITHER GOVERNMENT

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REFUGEE OFFICIALS NOR UNHCR WERE AWARE OF THE VISIT
BEFORE THE MINISTER ARRIVED.

11. SECURITY CONCERNS. SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE REFUGEE
HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE REGION, MICHEL MOUSSALLI,

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SUBJECT: BURUNDI REFUGEES: TOO MANY PROBLEMS;

EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR AND DCM CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF RETURNING BURUNDI REFUGEES. SOME, HE SAID, HAD CROSSED INTO BURUNDI (KIRUNDO) JANUARY 11 AND HAD RETURNED TO RWANDA AFTER BEING ATTACKED. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH RETURN IS IN THE POLITICAL INTEREST OF RWANDA, BURUNDI MUST CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR RETURN. THE REFUGEES WANT ASSURANCES OF SECURITY. MOUSSALLI SAID THE UNHCR/BUJUMBURA REP PLANS TO DISCUSS WITH THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND ITS PROMISE OF FULL COOPERATION ON THE REFUGEE ISSUE.

12. A REGIONAL APPROACH. MOUSSALLI SAID IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO USE ITS SCARCE RESOURCES IN BURUNDI FOR "DURABLE RETURN". GROOT TOLD DCM AND USAID THAT UNHCR IS ALREADY PLANNING ASSISTANCE FOR THE BURUNDI REFUGEES ONCE THEY RETURN. HE SAID THE UNHCR/KIGALI IS ASSESSING AVAILABILITY IN RWANDA OF NON-FOOD ITEMS THAT COULD BE MOVED INTO BURUNDI FOR RETURNEES. HE SAID THEY WOULD REQUIRE TOOLS AND SEEDS FOR PLANTING, FOOD UNTIL THEIR FIRST HARVEST, AND ASSISTANCE IN REBUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE.

BUDGET

13. NEED CONTINUES. GROOT SAID UNHCR WILL BE MAKING ANOTHER APPEAL FOR FUNDS TO HELP THE BURUNDI
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REFUGEES, EITHER IN THEIR PLACES OF REFUGE OR IN BURUNDI, GIVEN UNHCR'S COMMITMENT TO A REGIONAL SOLUTION. HE SAID UNHCR HAS RECEIVED ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF ITS APPEAL FOR USD 52 MILLION TO CARRY THE OPERATION THROUGH APRIL 30. ECHO, HE SAID, HAS PROVIDED ABOUT USD 21 MILLION, MUCH OF WHICH WAS APPLIED TO FOOD, WATER, AND HEALTH NEEDS OF THE OPERATION. (NOTE: GROOT CLAIMED THE ECHO CONTRIBUTION COVERED THE TOTAL BUDGET OF CARE INTERNATIONAL AND OXFAM FOR THEIR WATER SYSTEMS. CARE TOLD DCM THAT THERE WILL BE A GAP BETWEEN THEIR

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COSTS AND THE ECHO GRANT, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF ECHO
LIMITATIONS ON LOCAL SALARIES AND RESTRICTIONS
AGAINST PURCHASING VEHICLES. END NOTE.)

RWANDAN RETURNEES

14. FROM BURUNDI. UNHCR HAS SO FAR IDENTIFIED 240
RWANDAN REFUGEES WHO RETURNED TO RWANDA IN OCTOBER
ALONG WITH THE BURUNDI REFUGEES FOLLOWING THE FAILED
COUP. THEY ARE LIVING WITH FAMILIES IN THE BUTARE
PREFECTURE. UNHCR ESTIMATES THERE MAY BE UP TO ABOUT
1,000 WHO HAVE RETURNED BECAUSE OF INSECURITY IN
BURUNDI. UNHCR HAS PROVIDED THE 240 WITH FOOD FOR
THREE MONTHS. THEY PLAN TO DO THE SAME FOR ANY
OTHERS WHO COME TO THEIR ATTENTION. SPECIAL ENVOY
MOUSSALLI SAID BURUNDI REFUGEES ARE REPORTEDLY
TERRORIZING OTHER RWANDAN RETURNEES IN THE BUGESERA
REGION SOUTH OF KIGALI. UNHCR IS ORGANIZING A JOINT
VISIT TO THIS AREA WITH THE GOR AND RPF.

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15. FROM UGANDA. MOUSSALLI TOLD AMBASSADOR AND DCM
THAT UNHCR IS RELUCTANT TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE
GROUP OF 2,000 RETURNEES WHO ARRIVED RECENTLY IN
RPF-HELD TERRITORY FROM UGANDA (REPTTEL). CONTRARY TO
FIRST REPORTS, THE GROUP INCLUDES NOT ONLY PERSONS
WHO FLED RWANDA 30 YEARS AGO BUT ALSO PERSONS WHO
FLED THE AREA NOW HELD BY THE RPF WHEN THE WAR BEGAN
IN 1990. HE IS WORRIED THAT THEIR PRESENCE IN THE

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SUBJECT: BURUNDI REFUGEES: TOO MANY PROBLEMS;

RPF AREA WILL ENCOURAGE DISPLACED PERSONS AFRAID OF
LOSING THEIR LAND TO THE NEWCOMERS TO RETURN
PREMATURELY, BEFORE RPF FORCES ENTER THE TROOP
ASSEMBLY ZONES AND BEFORE LAND MINES ARE CLEARED. HE
BELIEVES UNHCR ASSISTANCE FOR THIS GROUP MIGHT
ENCOURAGE OTHER REFUGEES TO RETURN FROM UGANDA BEFORE
PREPARATIONS ARE IN ORDER. MOUSSALLI SAID UNHCR
PLANS TO DISCUSS WITH WFP AND ICRC WHAT CAN BE DONE
FOR THESE RETURNEES. HE SAID UNHCR DOES NOT WANT TO
BECOME INVOLVED WITH RELIEF IN THE NORTH.

16. TEST CASE. DCM SUGGESTED THAT UNHCR MOVE
CAUTIOUSLY WITH REGARD TO THE RETURNEES IN THE
NORTH. UNHCR COULD TREAT THEM AS A "TEST CASE" AND
USE THEIR PRESENCE TO ENCOURAGE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE

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GOR AND THE RPF ON THE "SPONTANEOUS REFUGEE" ISSUE SO
SENSITIVE WITH THE RPF. DCM NOTED THAT THE
GOVERNMENT IS IN A DELICATE POSITION. ANY

APPEARANCE OF NEGLECT COULD PROVOKE A BACKLASH IN
NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WHO HAVE YET TO SEE CONCRETE
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PROOF THAT RWANDA WILL FOLLOW THROUGH ON ITS
COMMITMENT TO ACCEPT REFUGEE RETURN.

17. RPF PRESSING. THE RPF IS PRESSING THE GOR AND
UNHCR TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO THE PLIGHT OF THE
"SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES" AND PROVIDE "URGENTLY NEEDED"
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. RPF INSISTENCE REPORTEDLY
PROMPTED MOUSSALLI TO WALK OUT OF A MEETING WITH THE
RPF ON THE SUBJECT. THE RPF AND GOVERNMENT ARE
MEETING 1/31 TO EXAMINE THE ISSUE.

COMMENT

18. WE RECOMMEND USG CONSIDER MAKING A SECOND
CONTRIBUTION TO UNHCR FOR BURUNDI REFUGEES AS OUR
FIRST CONTRIBUTION OF USD 5 MILLION WAS AGAINST THE
FIRST 3-MONTH APPEAL. THE BURUNDI REFUGEES WILL NEED
FOOD ASSISTANCE AT LEAST UNTIL THE NEXT HARVEST
(JUNE) WHETHER THEY ARE IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES OR
BURUNDI. THEY WILL NEED REINSTALLATION ASSISTANCE IF
THEY REPATRIATE. RMA/GENEVA WILL WANT TO CONSULT HCR
HEADQUARTERS ON THE ACTUAL STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO
APPEAL RUNNING THROUGH APRIL 30 AND DIRECTION OF
PLANS FOR NEW APPEAL.

19. THE USG WILL WANT TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH
WFP/ROME TO ENSURE THAT THE FOOD PIPELINE CAN PROVIDE
FOOD SECURITY FOR THE BURUNDI REFUGEES. WE NEED TO
INSIST ON TRANSPARENCY AND APPROPRIATE COORDINATION
WITH FOOD NEEDS FOR RWANDA'S DISPLACED, DROUGHT
VICTIMS, AND RETURNING REFUGEES.

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20. EVEN THOUGH UNHCR MIGHT LIKE TO TAKE A HANDS-OFF ATTITUDE TOWARD THE RETURNEES FROM UGANDA, WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR INVOLVEMENT AS A WAY OF MOVING FORWARD THE LONG-AWAITED REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR RWANDA REFUGEES. RWANDA IS TOTALLY UNPREPARED TO BEGIN RECEIVING REFUGEES AT THIS TIME AS PLANNING FOR REFUGEE RETURN HAS BEEN STALLED FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE WORK DONE ON THE ARUSHA PEACE ACCORD PROTOCOL ON REFUGEES. AND THAT IS ONLY ON PAPER. THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO FORCE SOME HARD DECISIONS OUT OF BOTH SIDES.

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